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ABSTRACT

In the course of planning a program to increase the number of black PhDs, the Ford Foundation conducted a survey of blacks who held a doctorate. Questionnaires were sent to 2280 persons. Of 1096 responses, 140 persons, or 12.7% were 60 or older, and 102 or 9.4% were under 35 years of age. A greater percentage of men and women earned their degree between the ages of 35-39 than during any other five year span. The majority received their undergraduate training at black colleges. More than 70% required ten years or more to obtain the doctorate. More than half the degrees earned were in education and the social sciences. 85.4% were employed by colleges and universities, overwhelmingly in black institutions. A recent survey of the PhDs awarded from 1964 through 1968 at 63 graduate schools indicated that only 294 or .8% of the 37,456 degrees were awarded to black Americans. The demand for black PhDs is rapidly increasing and several programs have been organized to help blacks in obtaining the doctorate. The Ford Foundation has instituted a fellowship program for blacks interested in a college teaching career. It is also assisting faculty members at predominantly black colleges who are participating in advanced study programs. It is hoped that by 1973, almost 2% rather than the present 1% of all American PhDs will be black. (AF)

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A Survey of Black American Doctorates

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Conducted by James W. Bryant, program advisor,
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In the course of planning a program to increase the number of black Ph.D.s, the Office of Special Projects of the Ford Foundation conducted a survey of black men and women who hold the doctorate. The results support the generally held assumption that less than 1 per cent of America's earned doctoral degrees are held by Negroes. From a variety of sources, the names of 2,280 Negro Ph.D.s were obtained.* For the immediate future the percentage is not likely to change, since another survey indicates that less than 1 per cent of the Ph.D. candidates at the close of the 1967-1968 academic year were black men and women.**

The Foundation sent a one-page questionnaire (see page 10) to current Negro holders of the Ph.D. By June 30, 1969, replies were received from 1,096 black men and women who hold the earned doctorate. The tables and information that follow are based on these responses (the following degrees are included: Ph.D., Sc.D., Ed.D.; not included are: M.D., D.D.S., and D.V.M.).

Age

Table I shows information on the age of doctorate holders who responded to the questionnaire.***

Of 140 persons reporting, 12.7 per cent (108 men, 12.5 per cent of men reporting and 32 women, 13.6 per cent of women reporting), are 60 years of age or above. On the other hand, 102, or 9.4 per cent of all reporting (78 men, 9.1 per cent of men reporting and 24 women, 10.3 per cent of women reporting), are under 35 years of age.

A higher percentage of men—84.0 per cent—earn the doctorate before

*To insure as complete a census as possible, names were obtained from several sources and cross-checked. Between October 1, 1968 and May 31, 1969, the Foundation asked 104 deans of graduate schools of arts and sciences throughout the country for names and addresses of black Americans who had earned the doctoral degree from their institutions. Also, presidents and deans of predominantly Negro colleges were asked for the names and addresses of all black members of their faculties and staffs with earned doctorates. Finally, officers of professional organizations were asked to furnish the same information on their members, and many other individuals were contacted and asked for information on persons known to them.

**_Graduate Education and Black Americans_, Fred E. Crossland, Ford Foundation, November 25, 1968.

***Thirty-two men (3.7 per cent of all men reporting) and twenty-one women (9.0 per cent of all women reporting) failed to give their date of birth.

Table I **AGE AT TIME OF SURVEY—1968-1969**

Intervals	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
25-29	18	2.1	2	0.9	20	1.9
30-34	60	7.0	22	9.4	82	7.5
35-39	127	14.7	25	10.7	152	13.9
40-44	140	16.2	33	14.1	173	15.8
45-49	136	15.8	47	20.1	183	16.6
50-54	148	17.2	36	15.4	184	16.6
55-59	93	10.8	16	6.8	109	10.0
60 and over	108	12.5	32	13.6	140	12.7
No age given	32	3.7	21	9.0	53	5.0
Total	862	100.0	234	100.0	1096	100.0

Table I-A **TIME LAPSE BETWEEN BACCALAUREATE AND DOCTORAL DEGREE By Age Levels**

Time Lapse	Under 40	40-54	55 and Over
under 5 years	11.2%	2.9%	0.8%
5-9 years	58.4%	20.4%	9.9%
10-14 years	27.2%	32.7%	24.8%
15-19 years	3.2%	25.1%	18.1%
20 years and over	0.0%	18.9%	46.4%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

The above percentages are based on the 1,043 respondents who furnished birthdates.

age 45 than women—71.8 per cent. A greater percentage of men (27.9 per cent of men reporting) and women (23.9 per cent of women reporting) earn the degree between the ages of 35-39 (27.1 per cent overall) than during any other five year span (see Table II).

Undergraduate Colleges

The majority of black Americans who have earned the doctoral degree received their undergraduate training at black colleges. The survey reveals that 630 men and 181 women, a total of 811, received their baccalaureate degrees at predominantly Negro colleges as compared with 232 men and 53 women, a total of 285, who received their first degrees from white institutions.

Time for Completing Degree Requirements

The time lapse between the receipt of the baccalaureate degree and the conferring of the doctoral degree, for this group of respondents, ranged from three years to thirty-eight (38) years. More than 70 per cent required ten years or more. The following is a summary of this time factor:*

Period	Per Cent
3-5 years	4.0
5-9 years	25.6
10-14 years	29.6
15-19 years	19.4
More than 20 years	21.4
Total	100.0

Thus it has taken Negro Ph.D.s considerably longer to obtain the doctorate than Ph.D.s in general. The median is thirteen years, compared to seven-and-a-half years for Ph.D.s in general (in the humanities and social sciences; the median in the natural sciences is five years).

Fields of Study

More than half (54.9 per cent) of the degrees earned are in Education (28.6 per cent) and the Social Sciences (26.3 per cent). The balance is divided

*See Table I—A for additional information.

Table II **AGE AT WHICH PH.D. WAS RECEIVED**

Intervals	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
under 29	133	15.5	29	12.4	162	14.8
30-34	210	24.2	46	19.7	256	23.3
35-39	241	27.9	56	23.9	297	27.1
40-44	142	16.4	37	15.8	179	16.2
45-49	70	8.4	24	10.2	94	8.6
50-54	22	2.5	12	5.1	34	3.1
55-59	10	1.1	5	2.1	15	1.4
60 and over	2	0.3	4	1.8	6	0.5
No age given	32	3.7	21	9.0	53	5.0
Total	862	100.0	234	100.0	1096	100.0

Table III **FIELDS IN WHICH DEGREES WERE CONFERRED**

Field	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
Education	228	26.4	85	36.3	313	28.6
Social Sciences	242	28.0	46	19.7	288	26.3
Biological Sciences	120	14.0	22	9.4	142	12.9
Humanities	90	10.4	46	19.7	136	12.4
Physical Sciences	116	13.4	13	5.5	129	11.8
Other*	66	7.8	22	9.4	88	8.0
Total	862	100.0	234	100.0	1096	100.0

*Includes Agriculture, Business, Engineering, Home Economics, and Religion.

approximately evenly among the Biological Sciences, Humanities and the Physical Sciences, as shown in Table III.

Employment

Higher education offers, as would be expected, the greatest opportunity for employment of all Americans with the doctoral degree, with employment in the black colleges leading more than four to one for this group of respondents. Colleges and universities employ 937 (85.4 per cent) of the 1,096 persons included in the survey. Fifty-eight (5.3 per cent) are employed by some agency of government—federal, state, and local. Fifty-three (4.8 per cent) are holding positions in service agencies, such as the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the National Council of Churches, and the Urban League. Twenty-nine (2.7 per cent), including one woman, are employed in industry (see Table IV).

An analysis of the positions held by the 937 persons employed in colleges and universities revealed that of the 760 employed in predominantly Negro colleges, 563 men (96.4 per cent of the men reporting) and 161 women (91.8 per cent of the women reporting) hold positions from full professors through department heads, divisional directors, deans, and presidents. Of the 177 employed in white colleges and universities, 84 men (57.4 per cent of the men reporting) and 13 women (60.0 per cent of the women reporting) hold positions of full professors and above.

Prospects

According to the recent survey of the Ph.D. degrees awarded from 1964 through 1968, to which 63 American graduate schools of arts and sciences responded, only 294, or 0.8 per cent of the 37,456 degrees awarded were received by black Americans.* If this is representative of the number of Ph.D.s granted by higher education throughout the country, the annual number of new black Ph.D.s would have to be multiplied by 15 in order to reach 11.5 per cent, the estimated ratio of black Americans in the general population.

The underrepresentation of American Negroes in the ranks of Ph.D.s stems from essentially the same factors that account for their sparse numbers

*Ibid., page 1.

Table IV EMPLOYMENT OF BLACK DOCTORATES

Employment	Male		Female		Total	
	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent	Number	Per Cent
College & University	729	84.8	208	88.9	937	85.4
Government	47	5.4	11	4.7	58	5.3
Social Agencies	42	4.9	11	4.7	53	4.8
Industry	28	3.2	1	.4	29	2.7
Other*	16	1.8	3	1.2	19	1.8
Total	862	100.0	234	99.9	1096	100.0

*Includes retired and self-employed persons.

in higher education generally. That is, economic deprivation (both in terms of funds available for graduate training and the pressure to hold a job earlier than white, middle-class college-age men and women), inadequate academic preparation, and the vestiges of discriminatory admissions policies. At the Ph.D. level the economic problem is compounded by the higher cost of doctoral education and by the long period of preparation, for white and black students alike.

Despite sharply increasing enrollment of Negroes in undergraduate programs—an estimated 85 per cent in the last five years, to the point where Negro undergraduate enrollment is now estimated to be 6.2 per cent of the total—a comparable increase is not expected in the near future in the doctoral ranks.

At the same time demand for Negro Ph.D.s has increased sharply. The Ph.D. continues to be regarded as the *sine qua non* for college faculty standing. Holders of the doctorate are sought as faculty members both by predominantly black colleges seeking to raise their academic standing and by white colleges seeking a new level of minority representation in the faculty as well as in the student body. In addition, of course, demand by business and government for Negro Ph.D.s has increased.

Although several government and privately-funded programs of assistance for doctoral studies are in operation, Negro participation in them is generally poor. Other efforts are directed to advanced training at the predoctoral level; the Danforth Foundation, for example, awards some sixty predoctoral fellowships annually for faculty members of predominantly Negro colleges. Accordingly, the Ford Foundation in 1968 established a program of doctoral fellowships for black students, designed to help more Negro men and women enter the field of college teaching. The program is funded at $1 million annually, and consideration will be given to continuation before the initial five-year authorization expires.* Some assistance programs are aimed primarily at doctoral training for the professions (the Woodrow Wilson doctoral fellowships for Negroes in business administration, for example). The

*In 1969, the Foundation established similar doctoral fellowships for Mexican-American, Puerto Rican, and American Indians, whose proportionate numbers among American Ph.D.s are even fewer than Negroes.

A SURVEY OF BLACK AMERICANS IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Name_____ Sex____ Birth Date_____
Address_____ Telephone_____
_____

Academic Discipline_____

Degrees Earned Year College or University

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Professional Experience
From To Title Employer

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Present Position_____ Date Appointed_____

Other Information (honors, published writings, offices held in national organizations, etc.)

Foundation's is the only major effort directed at producing black Ph.D.s for college teaching careers.

The absolute number of fellowships awarded under this program is small—forty-five were awarded the first year, and the goal for the 1971-1972 academic year is fifty-five. Proportionately, however, the program may yield a major increase—about one-sixth at current figures—in the total of Ph.D.s awarded annually to Negroes.

The Foundation believes that its program constitutes a net addition to the number of black Ph.D.s rather than a replacement of financing for doctoral candidates who would have obtained the degree in any case. That is because most black doctoral students normally depend on subsidies from graduate schools, and the Foundation's fellowships permit graduate schools to increase the number of black doctoral students. This assumption has been confirmed by the requests from many graduate schools for the names of candidates for the Doctoral Fellowships for Black Students who are qualified for doctoral programs notwithstanding the fact that they were not awarded the Foundation fellowships, which are limited in number. In other words graduate schools are affirmatively recruiting greater numbers of qualified black doctoral students, not just competing for the cream of the undergraduate crop.

Another source of an expanded body of Negro Ph.D.s is advanced-study programs for present faculty members of predominantly Negro colleges. These are for post-baccalaureate work generally, not necessarily through the doctorate. Since 1967 the Foundation has assisted some 100 such faculty members annually for periods of from one summer to a full academic year plus two summers; the current period of assistance is a minimum of a full academic year. It is not possible yet to estimate how many faculty members will continue through the doctorate, nor the number who ordinarily would have obtained the doctorate without such assistance. It is safe to assume, however, that the fellowships permit those who ultimately obtain the doctorate to accelerate the process.

Barring a substantial increase in financial support for black doctoral studies, we believe the number of Ph.D.s awarded to Negroes may rise by perhaps 20 per cent by 1973. At that, Negroes will still constitute less than 2 per cent of all American Ph.D.s.

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